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WASH METHODIST MISSIONS.

From the London Methodist Magazine.

From the Rev. JOHN BROWN, a Missionary (made at a Missionary Meeting in London) respecting the religious state of St. Domingo, whence he had been compelled by opposition of the people to return home. The motion which has just been read, respecting the Negroes in the West Indies, and the effects which have been produced by the preaching of the doctrines of Christianity among them. As I stand here, therefore, be my place, simply to state what has fallen under my own observation, as a corroborating testimony to the points; and I think, when these ideas are deeply impressed on our minds, we shall need no other motives to exert all our energies. About two years ago, the entire Island of St. Domingo, was divided between the kingdom of Spain, and the republic of Hayti. There is no communication between the two countries, my remarks must be considered as applying only to the republic of the Island. It was on the 7th of February, 1817, that Mr. Catts and I arrived at Port au Prince, the capital of the Island. The people there have been called, and call themselves Christians; I never met with any who would assert, I am a good Christian, a very Christian, Sir! but how have they made Christians? Pere Labat, in the year of the Indies, says, "When I hear of Negroes lately arrived from Africa, I pay them a visit; I begin by making them to make the sign of the cross, by leading their hand, I make the sign of the cross upon them, and taking possession of them in the name of the holy Catholic church; the people who understand nothing at all of religion, open their eyes wide, and seem about to be consigned to destruction." The method of making Christians in Pere Labat's time, appears to be the same as is used at present. A few weeks before the arrival of the Havannah, by one of the Spanish ships, was brought into Port au Prince, and placed in the hospital until the priest, accompanied by the President, went one morning and baptised them by wholesale.

On may easily suppose, that unless some mode of giving instruction affords, they must be totally unacquainted with the Christian religion. They have churches and priests, and public worship is performed every day in the week, and on Sundays, it is true; but during two years I was at Port au Prince, I never heard of a sermon being delivered, or public instruction given. Their worship consists in dances, images, pictures, incense, singing mass, &c. Mass is said in Latin, a language which perhaps is a thousand understands. They have a peculiar respect for the dead; in many of their religious ceremonies are designed more for the dead than the living; for the masses sung on week-days are general sung for the souls of the dead. In some cases the relations of the dead are so poor as not to be able to pay for great mass sung for the departed in the church; another method is resorted to: A chanter from the neighbourhood is invited on an evening appointed, and brings with him a cloth covered with breads, crosses, and grotesque figures, which is hung round the room set apart for the ceremony, a temporary altar is raised on one side is placed a bason of holy water, on the other a plate to receive offerings; the individuals who attend approach the holy water, dip their finger in it, make the sign of the cross, then retiring to the side on which is the plate, put down offerings of money, and the amount of recompense given to the chanter; whilst the chanter is engaged in singing and offering up prayers within, a collection in the adjoining yard are being and singing to the beating of the gong. But the most awful consideration, that they have no idea of connection with religion; they attend to ceremonies as something which is to secure their salvation, whilst it allows them to continue quietly in the practice of their sins. Sabbath breaking is common; the market, and the evening for pleasure, is hardly thought of amongst the lower classes. With regard to their knowledge of religion, an anecdote or two is sufficiently illustrative. I asked a female from the mountains, who was a visit, "Do you ever pray?" she answered, "What do you say, Sir?" "Do you pray to Almighty God?" A person present replied for her, "She knows how to make the sign of the cross." She answered, "Yes, I know how to make the sign of the cross, that is all." Their ignorance leaves them open to the grossest delusions, they carry about their little books, and garde corps, in which they confide, through these they hope to be delivered from the evils not only of this world, but that which is to come. A person in our house desiring us to teach him

to read; after I had shewn him his lesson, he gravely inquired if he should burn a candle to the Blessed Virgin, in order that she might help his understanding, and assist him to learn to read. At another time he wished to speak with me in private; he told me that he had some money in a drawer, but a girl in the house having access to it he suspected he had lost some of it, he wished me to tell him where it was, and how he should obtain it. I mention this, because we have had hundreds of applications of a similar kind. Doubtless, for interested motives, the idea is propagated amongst them, that priests possess a supernatural power in discovering secrets, &c.

Mr. Catts and myself sailed from England in a ship belonging to that benevolent man, whose name is to be mentioned with honor, John Irving, Esq. of Bristol. The first place at which we touched was Tobago. Here we found an Island with about 13,000 inhabitants, one clergyman, and but one place of worship. We were kindly received, preached several times, and represented the situation of the Island to the Committee, and at present there is there a Missionary with a society of about 150. I can give you but an imperfect idea of my feelings whilst sailing in the Caribbean Sea; I thought of Columbus, and the murdering Spaniards; I thought of the Caribbs, who have nearly disappeared; I thought of Africa and her wrongs; I thought of slaves, I heard the clanking of their chains, and the iron entered into my soul. Amidst these gloomy images my mind was relieved by a subject more animating, the triumphs of the Cross. Holding the Minutes of Conference in my hand, I remarked, as the Islands lifted in succession their blue heads above the waves, here is placed such a Missionary, with so many persons under his care; and when I thought that on these specks of earth have been raised up societies to the amount of 20,000, exclusive of those who have entered heaven during the last 30 years, I felt a conviction which every one in this assembly must have felt who had been in my situation, that our mission amongst the Negroes, in the West Indies, if not the most successful, is at least one of the most successful in the world.

On our arrival at Port au Prince we found ourselves strangers in a strange land, surrounded by persons of another colour, and another language, and who eyed white men with the greatest jealousy; but having obtained permission from the President, we entered on our public ministry, and the result of our labours has been stated in the Report which has this day been read.

In the history of the Moravian Missions it is recorded of the brethren in Greenland, that for five years they laboured without seeing any fruit of their mission; when in 1740 they adopted a very material change in their preaching. They had been accustomed to preach on the nature and attributes of God, his relation to man, and the duties resulting therefrom, but now they, in the proper sense of the word, preached Christ and him crucified; and immediately the most astonishing effects were produced. A conviction of this truth ever rested on my mind, that the doctrine of Christ crucified is the great instrument designed by Almighty God to effect the conversion of the world. I have reasoned with the Haytiens on the law of God. I have endeavored to bring home their sins to their consciences. I have thus deprived them of the props on which they leaned; but when expatiating on the great love of God, in giving his Son to die for them, I have seen them melt, and the big tear roll from their sable faces.

With regard to the experience of those joined in our society; several of them, by their conduct and conversation, gave every reason to believe that they were truly converted to God; and I could easily adduce some blessed testimonies in proof.

I do not design at present to enter into a detail of the persecution we have undergone; suffice it to say, we have felt it. But as it respects our future prospects in that Island, I remark, I believe a seed of righteousness is planted which hell shall not destroy. We distributed numbers of Bibles and New Testaments, several thousands of religious Tracts, many sermons and other books of piety. We delivered many discourses, not only in Port au Prince, but also in the country. A spirit of inquiry is excited, which will produce an increase of light, and though on account of the opposition we met with, we have thought it prudent to withdraw for the present, yet I hope that at a future period a door will be opened to preach the gospel there. My heart is still warm towards them; & should this door re-open, you have no one who knows the people or their language better than I do; and I am ready to cross the Atlantic again, to exercise my ministry among them.

Speech of the Rev. J. ANDERSON, at a meeting of the London Methodist Missionary Society, in May last.

Lest my attachment to the Missionary cause should suffer the slightest suspicion, I tremblingly advance, to proclaim my most decided and unequivocal approbation of your object, and thus publicly bind myself to renewed exertions in this work of faith, and labour of love. Already, Sir, I feel the spirit by which this assembly is an-

imated, bearing me above myself. I feel that I stand amongst persons who have caught the fervour of Missionary zeal! It is not the least valuable effect of these meetings that the principle of selfishness, which has so deeply entrenched itself in our nature, is powerfully assaulted; and they who would sullenly mutter, "Am I my brother's keeper?" learn to suppress the unchristian feeling, and yield their hearts to the influence of better principles,—principles of generosity, liberality, and benevolence,—principles which lead to the recognition of the habitable globe as our home, and collective man as our brother.

Can a more sublime object be proposed to Christian zeal, than the evangelization of the whole world? An object which defies comparison. Parallel it, if you can, I will not say with the airy schemes of political theorists, or the splendid feats of modern heroes, but even with the most extensive plans, and the most substantial acts of commendable human benevolence. Take the only instance which will bear to be named, that of the man whom every Briton is proud to acknowledge, who, in the language of his elegant eulogist, "visited Europe to dive into the depth of dungeons, to plunge into the infection of hospitals, to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain, to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, attend to the neglected, visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries." Study his plan, so original—so full of genius and liberality. Pursue him in "his voyage of discovery, his circumnavigation of charity," then pause awhile and consider,—the World is a dungeon, in which millions "are tied and bound by the chain of their sins"—an hospital, in which moral diseases of every description prevail,—a region, full of misery and woe!—the Gospel proclaims liberty to the captive—health to the diseased—and happiness to the wretched: and say, whether, as holiness is more necessary than bodily health, the soul more valuable than the body, and the concerns of eternity of greater consequence than those of time, it be not true that the object which we propose to ourselves, exceeds this most distinguished act of human benevolence, in a ratio for which it is impossible to find a parallel. Indeed we may safely pronounce, in the accommodated language of inspiration, "It has no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth."

Our little Missionary detachments have gained an establishment in different parts of the enemy's territory. They have kept up a well-directed fire. Even now, they are bearing down on the formidable phalanx of the foe. Inspired with holy intrepidity, animated by the banner of the cross, which waves in the midst of them, they go forth "to fight the battles of the Lord." Will you not furnish them with supplies? Dare you refuse them ammunition? Is there a cowardly spirit present, who would sound a retreat? Retreat! Sir, a British drummer once replied, when commanded to beat a retreat, "There is no such beat in the British service!" Sir, We are British Christians! We have "assaulted the strong holds of Satan,"—we have been greatly successful,—and shall we now relax? God forbid! Onwards! is the watchword of the Captain of our salvation. Our Bibles say, Onwards! The Missionary Committee say, Onwards! The exertions of our fellow Christians say, Onwards! The misery and danger of the heathen world, say, Onwards! Onwards! echoes through every bosom. Onwards! beams on every countenance in this assembly.

Sir, the motion before the meeting notices the exertions of females, and of our juvenile friends. We all recollect the last memorable signal of our great naval Hero, "England expects every man will do his duty." In our warfare it is also expected that every woman will do her duty. Thank God, there is no lack of female energy! The zeal of the sex in every good work has again and again given the lie to that abominable eastern maxim, that "Women have no souls!" No souls, Sir! if the the expansive power of benevolence be the criterion, they have the largest souls—if sympathy with the distressed, they have the tenderest souls;—and if devotedness to the blessed Saviour, they have the purest & the best of souls! I am happy to bear a public testimony to female zeal, in the Bible and Missionary cause, in the town where I reside. It is spreading through the kingdom. And not in vain shall we call on the sex for their help, to snatch the devoted infant from the devouring Ganges—to quench the flames of the funeral pile—to allure the self devoted victims from under the wheels of the idol of cruelty and lust—to break it into a thousand pieces, and scatter it to the winds of heaven!

Sir, To the young persons, noticed in the motion, I would suggest a consideration, which, as it gave rise to their Missionary exertions, ought to stimulate their continuance and increase, as an offering of gratitude to the "Father of lights;" I allude to the signal triumph of the Gospel in our happy country. O the wonders it has accomplished! Where now, shall we look for the vestiges of that idolatrous,

druidical system, which once prevailed amongst the ancient Britons? Where for the cruel and blood-stained system of the Edda, imported by our Saxon ancestors from Scandinavia? Where for the horrid superstitions, grafted upon the "tree of life," which hid its beauteous foliage from the sight, and its immortalizing fruit from the grasp of perishing men; and in their stead, presented the gaudy leaves of a useless ceremonial, and the deadly fruit of a polluting superstition. All, all have fled before the gospel, as the driven snow before the blast. The impieties of heathenism are no more! And the "tree of life," freed from the superincumbent load of popish corruptions, appears with redoubled beauty, "sends forth her boughs unto the sea, and her branches to the river," and bends beneath the weight of that fruit, "which is for the healing of the nations." Whilst we sit under its shade, and partake of its fruits, let it rejoice our hearts to behold, in the East, the West, the North, and the South, perishing mortals reaching forth their hands to "pluck and eat," that they may live for ever. Assured that this Gospel only can supply the moral wants of the heathen world, let us be true to our principles, and obedient to our Sovereign Lord: then shall we soon behold "the desert blossom as the rose," and hear enraptured seraphs announce the long desired event, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

SWITZERLAND.

From the London Missionary Register. Interview of Mr. Owen with Pastor Oberlin, at Waldbach.

From Basle, under date of Sept. 16, 1818, Mr. Owen transmitted the following picturesque description of his visit to the venerable Pastor Oberlin.

"Waldbach has completely filled my mind, and laid such hold on my warmest affections, that I can scarcely bring myself to think, or speak, or write, on any thing but Pastor Oberlin, and his Ban de la Roche. You will remember, that the first Foreign Letter which awakened an interest in our minds, the Letter which made its way most directly to our hearts, and which, at the celebration of our First Anniversary, produced the strongest and (if I may judge of others from myself) the most lasting impression upon us all, was that, wherein this venerable Pastor reported the distribution that he proposed to make of the Bibles assigned to him; and drew, with the hand of a master, the characters of those women who laboured with him in the Gospel, and to whom, as the highest remuneration that he could bestow and their ambition coveted, a Bible was to be presented.

"I cannot describe the sensations with which I entered the mountainous parish (containing five villages and three churches) in which this Primitive Evangelist (who for more than half a century has occupied this station) exercises his functions; and still less those with which I entered his residence, and approached his venerable person. The reception which he gave me was such as, from the profound humility of his character, might have been anticipated. My visit to him and his flock was wholly unexpected; and, when I announced to him on my introduction, that I appeared before him as the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to testify, on their part, the respect and affection with which they regarded him, as one of the earliest and most interesting of their Foreign Correspondents, the good man took me by the hand, and drew me gently towards the seat which he usually occupies, exclaiming, but without any turbulence of either voice or manner—"Sir, this is too great an honour: how shall I answer words like these?" After the first emotions had subsided, our conversation became familiar; and, as it never ceased, from that time to the moment of our separation, to turn, more or less, upon the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, as they appeared in the small scale of his own, or the great scale of the Bible Society's Labours, it never ceased to be deeply interesting, and pregnant with edification.

"The Sunday exhibited this venerable man in the pastoral character, under which it had been so much my desire (might it but be permitted me) to see him. As he makes the circuit of his Churches, the turn on this Sunday belonged to Belmont, distant about half a league from the Parsonage of Waldbach. At ten o'clock we began to move. Mr. Oberlin took the lead, in his ministerial attire, a large beaver and flowing wig; mounted on a horse, brought for that purpose, according to custom, by one of the bourgeois of the village, whose turn it was to have the honour of fetching his Pastor, and receiving him to dinner at his table. I rode as nearly beside him as the narrow track would allow. Mr. Renneberg, accompanied by Mr. Daniel Le Grand, followed. The rear was brought up by the bourgeois before mentioned, carrying a leathern bag slung across his shoulders, which contained the other part of his Minister's dress, his books, &c. and a respectable peasant as an attendant on the general cavalcade.

"I will not detain you by particulars, which, however interesting, would draw me too far from the main object of my attention. I will only say, that the appearance of the Congregation, their neat and becoming costume, their order, and their seriousness, together with the fervour, tenderness, and simplicity, with which the good Minister addressed them, both in his Sermon in the morning and his Catechetical Lecture in the afternoon, conveyed to my mind the most delightful impression—that of a sincere and elevated devotion.

"The interval between the Services was passed, partly in dining at the house of the happy bourgeois (for the duty of fetching and entertaining their Pastor, is, in the estimation of this simple people, a privilege of the highest order,) and partly in visiting some of the excellent individuals, both men and women, but particularly the latter, in which this part of the parish abounds. The affability and graceful condescension with which the Pastor saluted every member of his flock, wherever he met them, and the affectionate reverence with which young and old returned the salutation, were peculiarly pleasing: it was, on both sides, if a ceremony at all, the ceremony of the heart.

"On our return to the Parsonage, the evening was passed in edifying conversation, and concluded by a French Hymn, in which all the household united.

"On the ensuing morning, I had the honour of conveying my venerable host, amidst the bowings of his parishioners (who gazed with wonder at the unusual sight of their stationary Pastor seated in a travelling carriage) to the house of Messrs. Le Grand in Fouday, another of the villages in this extensive parish. Here we breakfasted; and, after much pleasing conversation with this amiable, benevolent, and well-informed family, I had the high honour of being introduced to Sophia Bernard, and Catherine Scheidegger! Maria Scheppler, the second on the list of this memorable trio, had, I found, been removed to her rest: the two whom I have mentioned, and who now stood before me, remained to fill up the measure of their usefulness in the work of their Lord. Never shall I forget the manner in which these interesting peasants received me, when, addressing them by name, I told them that I had known them nearly fourteen years; and that the account of their services, communicated to us by the Pastor whom they so greatly assisted, had been instrumental in stirring up the zeal of many to labour after their example. "O Sir," said Sophia Bernard, the tears filling her eyes at the time, "this does indeed humble us;" adding many pious remarks in relation to their obscurity, the imperfection of their works, and the honour which they considered it to labour for Him who had done so much, yea, every thing, for them. The scene was truly affecting. It was not without many an effort that I tore myself from it, and hurried from Ban de la Roche, that seat of simplicity, piety, and true Christian refinement, to resume my journey along the beaten road; and to pursue my object among scenes, which, whatever pleasures I had to expect, would suffer in the comparison with those which I had left behind me.

"Pastor Oberlin has been, from almost the commencement of our Society, a distributor of our Bibles; and such have been his industry and exactness, that all the Protestants in his extensive parish, and as many Catholics as were willing and permitted to have them, are, it is believed, in possession of the Scriptures. His exertions have also extended beyond the bounds of his own immediate jurisdiction: he is accustomed to attend to the wants of the whole of the Steintal; and his house is, therefore, a depot for Bibles and Testaments, in both the Protestant and Catholic Versions."

Interview of Mr. Owen with Leander Van Ess, at Winterthur.

Our Readers must have imbibed a measure of regard for the character and labours of Leander Van Ess, which will give great interest to the following passage from Mr. Owen's Letters:—

"On the morning of the twentieth [of September,] we started at five o'clock from Meinfeld; and, by great exertions, reached St. Gall in the evening. The next day, we arrived, and took up our quarters for the night, in the neat and quiet town of Winterthur. Scarcely had I seated myself in an upper chamber at the hotel, when a voice at the door announced the approach of a stranger; and, equally to my astonishment and delight, in rushed Leander Van Ess! Our meeting, thus casually effected, when every expectation of its taking place had been abandoned on both sides, was regarded as providential; and we felt it our duty to do our utmost to turn it to a profitable account. We, therefore commenced without delay, and continued without intermission, an interesting conversation on the object to which this extraordinary man is consecrating his time, his talents, and his labours, with a degree of vigour and devotedness almost without a parallel.

"Leander Van Ess is now in the prime of life. He appears to be about forty years of age. His countenance is intelligent and

